

## Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-12 ACDA-19 GAC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 OMB-01 RSR-01 /115 W

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R 270429 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7528  
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC

UNCLAS SEOUL 2640

E. O. 11652: NA  
TAGS: MARR, KS  
SUBJ: US FORCES IN KOREA

SUMMARY: WASHINGTON HAPDONG STORY THAT US IS MAINTAINING PRESENT TROOP CEILING FOR ANOTHER YEAR TO ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN ROK IN SOUTH- NORTH TALKS HAS BEEN GIVEN FRONT- PAGE TREATMENT ROK MEDIA. END SUMMARY

1. FOLLOWING HAPDONG ITEM WITH WASHINGTON DATELINE, ALSO REPORTED IN TV, RADIO, AND VERNACULAR PRESS, APPEARED FRONT PAGE OF ENGLISH- LANGUAGE KOREA HERALD APRIL 27 UNDER HEADLINE " US TO KEEP ROK STABLE IN DIALOGUE:"

QUOTE WASHINGTON ( HAPDONG ) - THE PLANNED MAINTENANCE OF THE PRESENT U. S. TROOP CEILING IN SOUTH KOREA FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER YEAR IS AIMED AT CONTINUING TO ENCOURAGE THE SEOUL GOVERNMENT TO PUSH THROUGH SOUTH- NORTH TALKS FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH, DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS HERE NOTED WEDNESDAY. PARA  
THEIR CONTIUED PRESENCE AT CURRENT LEVEL WAS ALSO MADE NECESSARY TO OFFSET EFFECTIVELY A POSSIBLE DELAY EXPECTED IN THE FIVE- YEAR ARMED FORCES MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, THEY BELIEVED. PARA  
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RESPONSIBLE U. S. OFFICIALS REPEATEDLY MADE PUBLIC THESE DAYS THAT 40,000- ODD U. S. TROOPS WILL HAVE TO REMAIN IN KOREA " FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER YEAR." PARA

UNTIL RECENTLY, IT HAD BEEN WIDELY ANTICIPATED THAT A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF U. S. TROOPS WOULD BE IN PROCESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, WHICH FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY MELVIN LAIRD HAD STRONGLY HINTED IN HIS OFFICE. PARA

HOWEVER, SUCCESSIVE CUT- BACKS IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO KOREA--- FORCED UPON BY CONGRESSIONAL ACTION--- WHICH IS BOUND TO AFFECT THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, AND THE RECENT NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. TROOPS MAY HAVE COMBINED TO FORGE THE NEW LOOK, THEY OBSERVED. PARA

OBSERVERS WENT ON THAT THEY COULD NOT FAIL TO SEE THE DIPLOMATIC LEVERAGE - TO BE GAINED BY KEEPING ITS PRESENT LEVEL - STRENGTHENED OVER BOTH SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA. PARA

MEANWHILE, A MINORITY OF OBSERVERS SUSPECTED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S INSISTENCE ON KEEPING ITS PRESENT TROOP LEVEL COULD BE ONE OF THE BUDGETARY TACTICS TO ENSURE A MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN CONGRESS FOR THE FISCAL 1974 PROGRAM. UNQUOTE  
UNDERHILL

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NMAFVVZCZ

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